critical digest

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This Week

Too Late the Phalarope-Belasco 10/11. Mary K. Frank presents Robert Yale Libott adaption of Alan Paton novel with Barry Sullivan. Directed by John Stix.

Thor, With Angels-Broadway Chapel Players 10/14... Me, Candido-Greenwich Mews 10/15... 3 Pirandello Plays-Open Stage 10/15.

Double in Hearts-Golden 10/16. Straus, Vroom present new comedy by Paul Nathan with Neva Patterson, staged by John Gerstad.

Hamlet-St. Ignatius (264 W 87). Shakespearwrights new home... The Comedian-Blackfriars-10/17.

The Apple Cart-Plymouth 10/18. Adams & Neebe present Shaw comedy with Maurice Evans, Signe Hasso, directed by George Schaefer.

Digests of Current NYC Theatre Reviews

The Loud Red Patrick-Ambassad or 10/3. Two pro notices filed for comedy by Chapman, News, and McClain, Journal American. While majority enjoyed antics of David Wayne and Arthur Kennedy they feared comedy by Joseph Boruff adapted from the Ruth McKenny novel was dull and filed with cliches. On the pro side, News aisle-sitter billed it as delicious family comedy with bits of it exhibiting a precious touch of lunancy. McClain added that the merry nonesense is superbly acted and directed. Con side headed by Times and Herald Tribune who feared that 1912 setting was matched with 1912 playwrighting cliches. Though Wayne and Kennedy offered some good comic routines, Watts, Post, felt it ended as rather mild and scattered entertainment. Okay for the folks who simply cannot get enough of that creamy molasses taffy, but otherwise Donnelly, World-Telegram & Sun found the proceedings dull.

Arms and the Man-Downtown(15 E 4) 10/1. Two pro and one con filed for revival of Shaw early play. Herridge, Post, and Dash, Women's Wear, found it stimulating fun. Amusing to hear and attractive to see done by a convincing company, reported Post editor. But Funke, Times, panned it as not as lackluster as the group made it sound.

Harbor Lights-Playhouse 10/4-10/8. 7 cons and 4 performances entered on records for Norman Vane's drama presented by Anthony Parella. Play, cast headed by Linda Darnell(making her NY debut) and Robert Alda, and even set by Perry Watkins shared in the drubbing. Times reviewer found all elements equally elusive. Grisly was the word used by Kerr, Herald Tribune, to describe the proceedings. Author had something on his mind, but he couldn't express it very well, notes Chapman, News. Play proves earnestness can be a bore, adds Coleman, Mirror. Several noted that the duck killed offstage in play was the most interesting and luckiest member.

Two building syndicates are currently shopping for sites for erecting combination theatre and office or apartment buildings. Harry Fromkes, who just bought the National Theatre, heads a group with $2,500,000 which plans to build an 1800 musical theatre in the West 50's. Jack Weiser, a theatre company manager, heads another group which plans to spend $1,000,000 for a 1700 seat arena musical house. Each would be located in an office or apartment building.

Plays

Best House in Naples has a new director. F. Hugh Herbert will stage play himself... New Girl in Town is name of musical version of Anna Christie being prepared by George Abbott and Robert Merrill... Harbor Lights closed after 4 performances... Tennessee Williams' Orpheus Descending to be produced by Whitehead & Stevens, Harold Clurman to direct.

Players

Charlton Heston to portray lead in Mister Roberts at City Center Dec 5... Claude Rains to star in Night of the Auk ... Nancy Wickwire to be featured in Child of Fortune... Equity moves to 226 W 47 after 30 years at 45 W 47... Elliot Norton signed as critic of Boston Daily Record after folding of Boston Post... Alexander Scourby replaces Ian Keith in final performances of Saint Joan... Nancy Devlin replaced Lynn Thatcher at last moment in Loud Red Patrick, latter had to have emergency operation.

Summer Playhouses

Stratford, Ontario 1957 season will run from July 1 to Sept 7 at the new permanent theatre. Christopher Plummer will star in Hamlet. Two other productions will be presented.

Other Broadways

Diary of Anne Frank was presented with simultaneous opening nights in 7 German cities. ..Play also opened in Tokyo ... Happiest Millionaire tour extended due NY housing shortage... Family of People by Patricia Joudry will be tried out in Toronto next month featuring Betty Garde.

Theatre TV Notes

Bert Lahr will be featured in Androcles and Lion on Oct 14 CBS Omnibus... Jose Ferrer to produce and star in TV production of Pal Joey in Feb.

Vaudeville

Judy Garland show at Palace a sell-out that grossed $58,000 for second week ... "Autumn Album" revue at Radio City Music Hall features Roger Ray,

Theatre Book Notes

Hill and Wang Publishers issuing "Dramabooks", paper bound editions, of English plays originally published in the Mermaid series. 12 to 18 titles will be published yearly.

Theatre Film Notes

A Passanger to Bali, produced in NY in 1940, will be filmed by Security Pictures ... Rodgers and Hammerstein and John Logan will prepare film version of South Pacfic for 20th Century Fox... Anthony and Cleopatra will be produced in Europe by new film company of Del Guidice & Kaufman with Margaret Leighton starred and Michael Redgrave as director.

OFF BROADWAY

The Lower Depths presented at 15 Second Avenue by Contemporary Theatre had a rough week. Revival of Gorki play re-opened after a 3 month summer recess. Gelb, Times, covered the opening and panned, mostly for its inexperienced cast. The landlord took the producers to court to collect back-rent totaling $270. The publicity brought forth a Queens builder who paid the back-rent and a portion of the current months rent. Inspite of this aid, the show was forced to close after 5 performances.

The Lesson and Escurial closed at Tempo Playhouse... Pictures in the Hallway will continue Sunday matinee and evening performances only at Playhouse through Nov 4... Once Upon an Island will be presented by Onyx Productions at Davenport Theatre Nov 15. Betty Adams will play the leading role, Vernon Washington will stage the attraction. ... No Exit will give a benefit matinee Oct 12 with proceeds going to the cast. Next attraction at Theatre East will be The Misanthrope to be presented and staged by Stephen Porter.

The Arrow-Maker, revival of 45 year old drama presented by Junaluska with an all Indian cast, panned by Calta, Times, as negligible as a dramatic work. Actor-producer plans series of all-Indian cast plays.

Twin-bill at Tempo Playhouse- The Lesson and Escurial harshly panned by all reviewers. McClain, Journal American, had few kind words suggesting that followers of Offbeat theatre might enjoy bill of 2 new plays. Escurial, if shortened, might make a suitable curtain raiser, thought Watts, Post.

THEATRE BOOK COMMENTS

"The Victorian Theatre" by George Rowell (OXford) was praised by Variety as well written, excellently documented and nicely illustrated... "The Uses of Drama" by Phillip Coggin(Braziller) recommended for bookish directors only by Variety. Scholarship of British volume is sound.

"The Kabuki Theatre" by Earle Ernst(Oxford) is one of the better books on the Japanese theatre, recommends Bowers, Times. Volume is one that no person seriously concerned with the theatre can afford to ignore.

TV THEATRE COMMENTS

CBS Omnibus 90 minute illustrated lecture on American musical comedy with Leonard Bernstein drew split notices from TV critics. Gould, Times, wished for a little more entertainment to go with Bernstein's academic treatise. Gross, News, thought program with a cast of talented young singers was exciting and at times fascinating.

THEATRE OUT OF TOWN

Tryouts this week include---- Apple Cart and Lil Abner in Boston... Auntie Mame, Best House in Naples, Happiest Millionaire in Philadelphia and Separate Tables in Princeton.

GREEN ROOM DEPARTMENT

NOW IS TIME... With the theatre business booming now is the proper time to attack some of the basic trouble spots, states Herald Tribune editorial. New theatre buildings, action against ticket scalpers and jacked-up prices were two of items named. Despite many plans and projects for new theatres, none ever seems to come to fruition.

COLUMN TIPS... Hellinger may be sold to City Playhouses, hears Winchell... Lynn Thatcher who left Loud Red Patrick due to operation wants to return to show, reports Lyons... My Fair Lady authors to do musical for Gina Lollobrigida and Tullio Carminati, notes Walker.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS... A NY editor has received mail from theatre-goers who read recent con reviews at two plays they had seen reviewer asleep, comments Gray, Post. Paper check anf found critic had written reviews after hearing curtain comment, concludes Gray... David Wayne would be superb in any song-and-dance show about George M. Cohan, suggests Walker, News... Why dont producers arrange for high-school and college students to see their shows at prices they can afford, urges Coleman, Mirror.

DRAMA MAIL-BOX... Does Lee Strasberg, Actors Studio head, approve of the way his actors and actresses drew when appearing in public, asks a Times reader... Lafayette High School, Brooklyn, applauded for its drama courses by a Mirror reader ... Equally as annoying as "Lost Words" is the Overloud Microphone, complains a C.D. subscriber.

ADD GARLAND... A critic can apply the word "artist" to JudyGarland without fearing he's exaggerating, explains Watts, Post. She makes her audience an integral and tremendously important part of her act... Current Garland success at Palace should not be confused with two-a-day vaudeville, points out Chapman, News. Vaudeville was popular because the prices were popular, not $7.50 tops.

INTERVIEW HI-LITES... Eric Portman, Separate Tables, discovered that for US audiences he will have to speak much slower than he did in the same show in London, he told Peper, World Telegram & Sun.. Frederic March, Long Day's Journey Into Night, planned to retire from NY stage in 1951 with Autumn Leaves, he told Herridge, but actor and wife(Florence Eldridge) couldn't say no to the O'Neill script. ... Charles Holman, No Time for Sergeants, won the role, his first Broadway part, after being summoned via mail to audition for Maurice Evans, he told Ormsbee, Herald Tribune. Holman had worked for Evans during the war.

SHUMLIN LETTER ADS... Inherit the Wind producer Herman Shumlin urged play-goers to buy the balcony seats to his show to get the best seats in the house. In another ad producer saluted Auntie Mame, by writers of his show. Ads are in agate type, one column wide and ten inches long.

" PROS & CONS BY T.M.K. "

The Loud Red Patrick is just about as exciting as any TV soap opera devoted to family problems and family councils. Filled with shallow characters, a non-moving plot and old jokes on diverse 1912 subjects the play would, and probably will, make perfect fodder for the Senior Class annual play. Arthur Kennedy and David Wayne, two fine actors who have appeared in many really important NY stage presentations, should probably be forgiven for their lapse of taste. If nothing else the current offering should inspire playwrights to write worthy material for their talents.

* * *

Arms and the Man at Downtown Theatre will be fine once the direction in the first two acts is speeded. For the most part the cast is good, though hardly inspired. But the direction starts off at a slow pace with countable pauses between speeches. By act III though all concerned are in fine Shaw style.

* * *

Lower Depths at Contemporary Theatre learned that all publicity is not good publicity. NY dailies gave ample space to stories on court order closing their third floor theatre for back rent and on the discovery of an "angel" to pay the bill. But theatre-goers did not go. They had read the one con notice and stayed away. And they were right.

Theatre industry and fans should give all possible aid to the two building syndicates currently hunting for sites in midtown to erect combination theatre and office or apartment buildings. Many well-intentioned real estate people have expressed interest in like projects, but the indifference of all-concerned did much to convince them that no one cared if there were any new theatres or not.

The various theatre organizations would be wise to contact the gentlemen heading the two syndicates and explain exactly how they can encourage and help in finding sites and supporting the new theatres when erected.

This is the month of politics . Theatre folk should spend a little of the time rallying to their own cause.

* * *

How to get tickets to the "good" shows? One wise-soul has the solution. He mails checks for tickets to all shows as they are announced for two weeks after the opening night. If the show is still running he can be assured that it is interesting and worthwhile. If it flopped and closed before that time, he gets his money back. Simple?

* * *

8 Broadway and Off Broadway openings this current week. The sad fact is that the Off-Broadway shows suffer the most during a hectic week of openings. Even with fair notices it is difficult to find an audience for 2 or 3 new Off Broadway shows in a week.

* * *

London Theatre

Plays

The Caine Mutiny Court Martial closed Oct 6 at Hippodrome due to return of Lloyd Nolan to NY... Plaintiff in a Pretty Hat by Hugh and Margaret Williams will open at Duchess Oct 12. Cast includes Hugh Williams, Richard Johnson, Andree Melly, Shirley Cain. Jack Minster directed, E. P. Clift and Anna Deere Wiman are the producers ... Fric, Frac to be presented in London by Margaret Hewes and Peter Zedek early next year.

Players

Carol Channing will make her London debut in Lend an Ear this fall... Alfred Drake will star in London production of Spewack's comedy Once There Was A Russian due to open at Christmas -time... Barry Wood will present the pantomime at Kemble, Hertford, this Christmas for 4 weeks, Jack and Jill.

Comments

Berlin is the European capital of serious drama, comments Tynan, Observer. This is due to the tenacious belief that great plays belong in great playhouses, and that is is the public responsibility to keep them there. The lesson of Berlin is that there is no theatrical freedom without theatrical subsidies. West sector has 7 legit playhouses, 2 state-aided, rest subsidised indirectly by Volksbuhne which sells seats at cut-rates to the working class. Measure for Measure, Erwin Piscator production of Danton's Death, and Long Day's Journey Into Night were highly praised by the London critic.

Digests of London Reviews

A River Breeze by actor Roland Culver added 3 more con notices. Shulman, Standard, billed it as a tired juggler. Hurren, Whats On, found only the earmarks of desperation in the comedy about a birth-mark. Not even a neat trifle, concluded A. M., Stage.

The Children's Hour revival at Arts Club panned for dull presentation by Clem, Variety, and A. M. Stage. Latter trade reviewer wondered why censor banned play which does not state its theme very boldly.

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CRITICAL DIGEST, 139 E 47, EL 5-6894

" OFF BROADWAY "

ARMS & MAN Downtown $3.60	85 E 4 GR 3-4412	1 Con- Times 2 Pro- Post, Womens Wear
ICEMAN COMETH Circle $3.60	5 Sher Sq OR 5-4437	6 Pro-Times, Trib, Mir, Post, J. Am. WT&S
NO EXIT T. East $3.30	211 E 60 TE 2-9220	5 Pro-Times, Trib, Post, Variety, Women W.
SAINT JOAN Phoenix $3.85	2nd & 12th AL 4-0525	5 Pro-Times, Trib, News, Mir, Post 2 Con- WT & S, J. Am
TAKE GIANT STEP Jan Hus $3.45	351 E 74 LY 6-8947	4 Pro-Times, Trib, Post, Women Wear 1 Con- J. Am
3 PENNY OPERA De Lys $4.85	121 Chris WA 4-8782	3 Pro-Times, Trib, Post
UNCLE VANYA 4th St- $3	83 E 4 OR45 710	7 NYC daily okayed

" TV THEATRE PROGRAMS

Oct 14- Key Largo on NBC with Alfred Drake
Oct 15- The Letter on NBC Producers Showcase with Siobhan McKenna
Oct 28- Born Yesterday on NBC Evans with Mary Martin
Nov 24- High Button Shoes on NBC with Nanette Fabray
Nov 25- Man and Superman on NBC Evnas with Maurice Evans
March '57- Romeo and Juliet on NBC with Old Vic
April '57- Great Sebastians-on NBC with the Lunts.

" THEATRE CALENDER "

6 Fingers 5 Finger Glove-Longacre 10/8
I Am a Camera- Actors Playhouse 10/9
Reluctant Debutante- Miller 10/10
Daisy Miller- Equity Library 10/10
Too Late Phalarope-Belasco 10/11

Thor With Angels-Bway Chapel 10/14
Pirandelo Plays-Open Stage 10/15
Me, Candido- G. Mews- 10/15
Hamlet-Shakespearerights-10/17
Double in Hearts-Golden 10/16
The Comedian-Blackfrairs 10/17
Apple Cart- Plymouth 10/18

Johnny Johnston-Carn Play-10/21
Lil Abner-St. James 10/22
Sea Gull- 4th St- 10/22
Richard II-W. Garden 10/23
Separate Tables-Music Box 10/25
Major Barbara-Beck 10/30
Auntie Mame-Broadhurst 10/31

Sleeping Prince-Coronet 11/1
Diary of Scoundrel-Phoenix 11/4
Misanthrope-T. East 11/5
Shoestring '57- Barbizon 11/5

Long Days Journey- Hayes 11/7
Teahouse Aug Moon-C. Center 11/8
Best House in Naples-11/8
Happiest Millionaire -11/?

Child of Fortune- Royale 11/13
Very Special Baby- 11/14
Once Upon Island-Davenport 11/15

Girls of Summer-Longacre 11/19
Candide- Beck 11/22
Build with One Hand- 11/28
Bels are Ringing- Shubert 11/29

Uncle Willie- 12/3
Night of Auk- Playhouse 12/3
Mr. Roberts- C. Center 12/5
Happy Hunting-Majestic 12/6

Everybody Loves Me 12/10
Good Woman of Setzuan-Phoenix 12/11

Small War on Murray Hill 1/2
Protective Custody- 1/7
Visit to Small Planet-Booth 1/9
Light a Penny Candle- 1/16
Waltz of Toreadors 1/17
Duchess of Malfi-Pheonix 1/22
Quare Fellow- 1/?

Best of Steinbeck-Playhouse 2/1
13 Daughters-W. Garden 2/18
Measure for Measure-Phoenix 2/19
My Royal Past 2/21
Hole in Head 2/27
Ziegfeld Follies -W. Garden 2/28

Taming of Shrew-Phoenix 3/19
Tom Sawyer- Phoenix 4/18
First Gentleman-4/?
New Girl inTown- 5/8

"C. D. VIEWS CURRENT SHOWS "

PROS	Damn Yankee, Diary Anne Frank, Inherit Wind Arms & Man, No Exit, Iceman Cometh, Uncle Vanya
CONS	Fanny, Middle Night, Will Success.

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Oct 10, 1956 PLAYGOERS GUIDE chart of CRITICAL DIGEST, 139 E 47, NYC--EL 5-6894

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This weekly chart of CRITICAL DIGEST, the weekly NYC theatre newsletter, presents up-to minute data on current business and critical reception of all current Broadway and Off-Broadway shows. Subscribers to CRITICAL DIGEST may write or phone for any other specific data or for late reviews.

"C"-Critics-figures refer to percentage of PRO notices filed by NYC daily drama critics. PRO means show was recommended as entertaining and/or stimulating, not if critic predicted if show would be a hit.

"B"- Business-figures refer to percentage and grosss ticket sales of last week and preceding weeks. "%" figures refer to last week's attendance. "CAP"-figures refer to capacity of house. Figures that follow are gross estimates of Variety for lastweek and preceding weeks. All figures are in thousands of dollars. Thus--"Cap $41--$14 $16" means that capacity of house is $41,000, last weeks gross sales $14, preceding week $16,000, etc.

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CAT HOT TIN ROOF Morosco $6.90	217 W 45 CI 6-6230	90% C- Chapman, News, sole con vote 60% B- Cap $31--$21 $23 $22 $21 $21 $23 $20 $19 $19
DAMN YANKEE 46th St- $8.05	226 W 46 CI 6-4271	100% C- Unanimous approval musical & cast 95% B- Cap $50--$48 $50 $49 $44 $48 $47 $45 $47 $42
DIARY A. FRANK Cort $5.75	138 W 48 CI 5-4289	100% C- Unanimous approval for Pultizer Prizer 95% B- Cap $28--$23 $23 $20 $22 $20 $20 $21 $22
FANNY Majestic $7.50	245 W 44 CI 6-0730	50% C- Con votes by Trib, Mir, Post, J. Am 60% B- Cap $62--$36 $38 $31 $33 $30 $29 $25 $26
HATFUL RAIN Plymouth $5.75	230 W 45 CI 6-9156	70% C- 3 Con votes- Mirror, Post, J. American 50% B- Cap $23--FINAL WEEK- Closes Oct 13
INHERIT WIND National $5.75	208 W 41 PE 6-8226	90% C- Funke, Times, sole con vote 80% B- Cap $31--$26- $28--re-opened
JUDY GARLAND Palace $7.50	1564 Bway PL 7-2626	100% C- Unanimous raves for Judy & Show. 100% B- Cap $58--$58 $58
LOUD RED PATRICK Ambassador $4.60	252 W 49 CO 5-1855	30% C- 2 Pros- News, J. Am Cap $36
MATCHMAKER Royale $5.75	250 W 45 CI 5-5760	90% C- Watts, Post, filed sole con vote 55% B- Cap $31--$18 $19 $15 $18 $14 $17 $12 $12
MIDDLE NIGHT ANTA $5.75	250 W 52 CI 6-8870	20% C- 2 Pro Play-Mir, J. Am- 100% Robinson 90% B- Cap $40--$36 $28 $21 $20 $23 Re-opened
MR WONDERFUL Broadway $7.50	1681 Bway CI 7-2887	10% C- Chapman, News, sole pro show-100% Davis 75% B- Cap $71--$$41 $43 $43 $43 $48 $50 $46 $45
MOST HAPPYFELLA Imperial $7.50	246 W 45 CO 5-2412	100% C- Unanimous raves for musical & cast 100% B- Cap $58--$58 $58 $58 $58 $58 $58 $58 $58
MY FAIR LADY Hellinger $7.50	1655 Bway PL 7-7064	100% C- Raves for musical of GBS classic 100% B- Cap $64 $64 $64 $64 $64 $64 $64 $64
NO TIME SGTS Alvin $5.75	250 W 52 CI 5-5226	100% C- Unanimous praise for soldier comedy 100% B- Cap $38 $38 $38 $38 $38 $38 $38 $38
NEW FACES Barrymore $7.50	247 W 47 CI 6-0390	40% C- 3 Pros- News, Mirror, Journal American 75% B- Cap $38--$27 $30 $26 $22 $27 $24 $20
PAJAMA GAME St James $6.90	240 W 44 LA 4-4664	100% C- Unanimous praise for musical & cast 60% B- Cap $52--$33 $38 $32 $29 $32 $33 $27
WILL SUCCESS Shubert $5.75	245 W 44 CI 6-5090	20% C- 2 Pros- J. American, News 40% B- Cap $41--$11$13 $16 $14 $14 $16 $14 $14

" RATINGS OF NYC CRITICS "

1955-56 season ratings of NYC drama critics on current Broadway shows by Critical Digest. "%" figures are percentages of pro votes in comparison to con votes of current shows. Variety figures are percentages of favorable reviews written for an entire season.

	C. D. %%	PROS	CONS	Variety'55-56	54-55
Atkinson, Times	60%	10	6	.490	.607
Kerr, Herald Tribune	55%	9	7	.394	.354
Chapman, News	80%	13	3	.527	.580
Coleman, Mirror	65%	11	5	.454	.566
Watts, Post	50%	8	8	.541	.426
McClain, Jour. Am	80%	12	4	.535	.532
Hawkins, WT & S	65%	11	5	.396	.548

" LONDON OPENINGS "

Oct 4- Doctor's Dilemma- Sayville
Oct 11- View from Bridge- Comedy
Oct 23- Much Ado About Nothing-Old Vic
Nov 12- Barrault-Renauld- Palace
Nov 15- Fanny- Drury Lane
Dec 10- Country Wife- Royal Court